

## **CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE UPDATE**

### **October 9, 2002**

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture and USDA-APHIS have completed the depopulation of 15 captive cervid facilities in the Nebraska Panhandle. There were 7 facilities that did not choose to participate in the depopulation effort. This program was undertaken to remove as many captive operations from the Nebraska endemic area as possible. Approximately 1,000 elk were depopulated and are in the process of being tested for CWD.

The Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said Wednesday it will temporarily ban imports of deer meat and related products from South Korea in the wake of an outbreak of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) affecting cervid animals there. (NOTE: I am unaware of the extent of CWD in South Korea but only know of one case in an elk in 2000. Anyone have additional information?).

A bull elk killed in the Middle Park area of Colorado has tested positive for chronic wasting disease. The discovery suggests the disease has jumped the Continental Divide again, this time not associated with a captive cervid facility. This is the second infected wild elk found west of the Divide. Earlier in the week the Colorado Division of Wildlife announced that an elk euthanized Sept. 6 near the northwest Colorado town of Hayden also had CWD.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife has confirmed that three mule deer from Jefferson County, Colorado have tested positive for CWD. These are the first cases of CWD in the Denver metro area and are located just north of Golden, Colorado. One of these animals was harvested by a hunter, one was a dead deer found and tested and the third was part of an agency culling operation. The Division of Wildlife is planning on additional culling operations to determine the extent of CWD in the area.

The Colorado chapter of the Wildlife Society is calling for an end to commercial elk ranching in the state, in part because of concerns over chronic wasting disease. The society called for the ranches to be phased out during a two-year period, with state general funds being used to compensate the ranchers for animals that haven't been disposed of after that time. The Wildlife Society's members are professional wildlife biologists in federal and state agencies and private enterprises. Greg Phillips, a society spokesman, said the society had been considering its recommendation for a year, prompted by the rising concern over the role of elk ranching in spreading CWD in the state.

To help achieve population management goals and prevent the spread of CWD, Colorado Division of Wildlife staff have culled 861 deer and elk on private and public property in several areas in northeastern Colorado since January 2002. Every deer collected was examined to further understand CWD distribution, prevalence and transmission. In some areas specific groups of deer were targeted for removal because CWD cases had been previously detected nearby. In many of these situations, prevalence among culled deer was much higher than expected based on

survey data. This finding suggests that targeted culling around CWD "hotspots" may be an effective management strategy.

### **ADDENDUM TO CWD UPDATE 19**

A little more information -- a captive elk herd near the east boundary of Custer State Park in the Black Hills, which was found to have CWD and reported last August 16, has now been depopulated. The best number I have at this time is 142 animals. Results of tests being performed at Colorado State University have not been received yet.